Foreword to the 7th newsletter

This is the 7th issue of the newsletter in the MSc program Cognitive Systems. The periods of reference are the winter semester 2019/2020 and the summer semester 2020. The issue of the Newsletter was already planned to be distributed during March. However, due to the accreditation process and the lockdown of university facilities the compilation of the Newsletter was postponed until the end of the summer semester. Again, the new issue is intended to serve as an information board that delivers recent information about the program structure and organization in the MSc program. Also, recent changes and developments as well as updates are summarized. At the end, the list of the appointed reviewers for Master theses is included as well.

News from the study commission

New student members in the study commission: During the current election period Mr. Birk and Mr. Franz stepped back from their position as student members. They were replaced by Ms. Isabelle Cuber and Mr. Daniel Craven through formal election by the faculty board. We thank Mr. Birk and Mr. Franz for their work in the commission.

New Academic Dean in Cognitive Systems: Prof. Neumann's application for a research semester (sabbatical) during winter semester 2020/21 was approved. Therefore, he had to resign from the position of Academic Dean. Prof. Braun kindly agreed to take this position and with the suggestion by the members of the study commission he has been elected as new Academic Dean for Cognitive Systems.

New election of student members in the study commission: The election period for student members in the study commission begins in October and ends after one year. For that reason, four student members have been suggested as candidates to be formally elected for the new election period. The elected students are Ms. Isabelle Cuber, Mr. Cihan Bulut, Ms. Linda Adomaa Denkyi, and Mr. Ethan Swisdak. We thank the former members for their contribution to the commission work.

Student union – president election

In the meantime, the recently founded student union for the Cognitive Systems program ran internal elections for new presidentship. The new president elect of the student union Cognitive Systems is Ms. Ria Matapurkar and Ms. Shirney Lin is vice-president.

Situation during the Corona-pandemic

The summer semester 2020 was conducted under the constraints of exceptional regulations due to the Corona pandemic. Virtually all course offers were presented online. Also examinations – postponed repeat exams from winter semester and the regular exams for summer semester's courses – had to be newly planned and reorganized. Exams as well as course elements that require physical presence and can be held in accordance with the hygiene rules, take place on campus.

Still at this time, as we compile the current issue of the Newsletter end of July 2020, several special regulations hold for level 3 of the Corona pandemic regulations at Ulm University. The information is continuously updated and are subject to ongoing revision. For that reason, we cannot state here any final status. Rather, we refer to the Ulm University websites with the measures in the corona pandemic:

https://www.uni-ulm.de/en/university/communications/information-about-the-coronavirus/

We strongly recommend that everyone should regularly visit the websites to get the most recent information. Outside of teaching, staff will return to Ulm University, provided that they find the conditions necessary to observe the hygiene rules.

In view of the uncertain development of the pandemic, chances are high that the forthcoming winter semester 2020/21 will also run under special regulations in a mixture of physical presence where possible and virtual online synchronous and asynchronous teaching.

Regulations regarding the module master's thesis

The final project for completion of the MSc program Cognitive Systems consists of the successful conductance of a master thesis project which covers 30 ECTS in the program. However, it should be emphasized that the deliverables to be rendered consist of two parts, each of which must be successfully completed and also separately protocoled in the Campus management system. In the subject-specific study and examination regulations for the MSc program Cognitive Systems the following is regulated in §12 paragraph (2) for the Master thesis:

> *"The master's thesis comprises a presentation of the project followed by a discussion. This accounts for one of the credit points corresponding to the master's thesis. Both parts must be passed."*

For that reason, the examiner of the Master's thesis must enter a grade for the colloquium (worth 1 ECTS) in the campus management system in addition to the grade for the written thesis (worth 29 ECTS). The important note is that both have to be successfully passed.

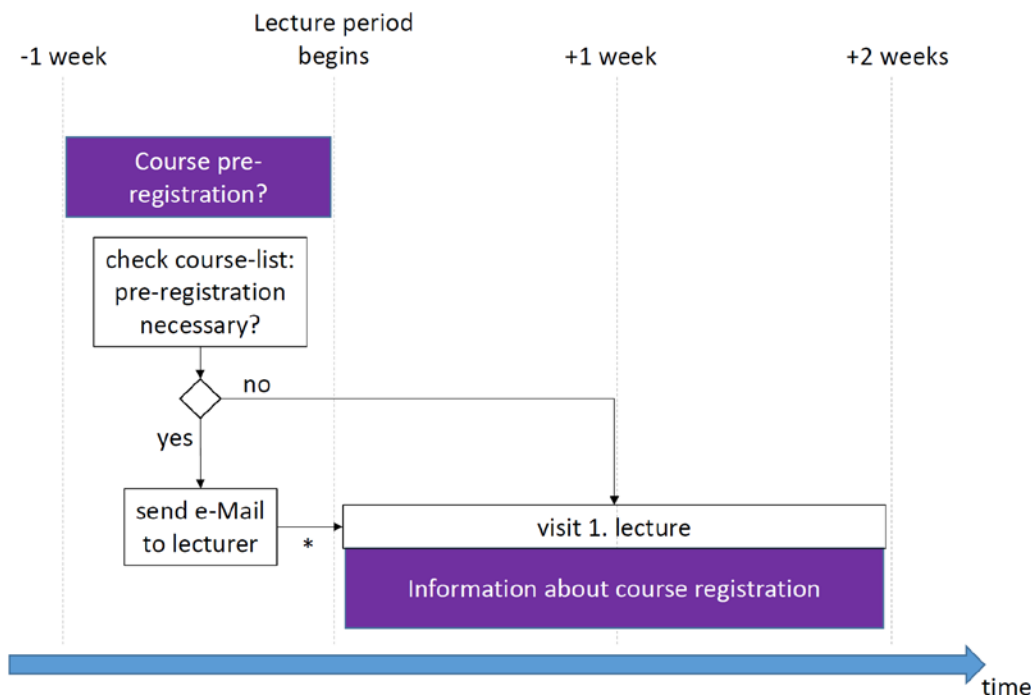## Course registration – process for registering

The following description is a repeat from previous newsletters in order to keep in mind the different registration procedures for student attendees in different courses.

Students may check the course list on the Cognitive Systems web page before the semester starts for the column "pre-registration". This column in the list contains a checkmark to indicate whether a pre-registration to the particular course is required or not. The schematic diagram below outlines the "workflow" in both situations.

- If **"no" pre-registration** is required (no checkmark), then attend to the first lecture to get information about the course and the further registration steps requested by the lecturer/Professor.

- If a **pre-registration is required** (checkmark is set), then

  1. send an email to the lecturer/Professor to register for the course (this step aims at helping the lecturers estimating the additional attendees and the required resources, and it reserves an enrolment in the specific course), and

2. attend the first lecture to get information about the course registration. **Important**: Students can only participate as registered student in the course for credit, if they have pre-registered via email first (step 1).

The process as outlined in the itemized list above is also sketched graphically in the flow diagram below.

*: occasionally receive Information whether attendance is granted or not (put on a waiting list)

Accreditation

The onsite visit of the reviewers was on February 19th, 2020. This visit was part of the cluster accreditation of all degree programs in Computer Science, in which MSc program Cognitive Systems is one of four programs (with the other three programs split into BSc and MSc).

The senate of Ulm University decided on June 24th, 2020 to accredit the cluster, including the MSc program Cognitive Systems. Overall, there was one mandatory requirement (for all degree programs), namely that the module handbooks (MHB) need to be checked for completeness and correctness. Dr. Kohlmeyer has already specified a workflow process to comply and fulfil this formal requirement.

Regarding the Cognitive Systems program one recommendation was stated in the report (by the reviewers) to discuss with the students any potential redundancies in the module "Fundamental Approaches to Cognitive Science". Once the final decision has been made and the academic life has returned back to presence of students and academic members, the academic dean and members of the study commission will discuss with student representatives whether further measures are necessary.

MSc theses – lecturers being actively involved in regular teaching

The most recent list of contributors active in the program can be found in the attached list.

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